



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

September 24, 2002

H.R. 3802

A bill to amend the Education Land Grant Act to require the Secretary of Agriculture to pay the costs of environmental reviews with respect to conveyances under that act

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Resources on September 12, 2002

Upon written application, the Education Land Grant Act authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to convey federal lands to school districts at nominal cost. The act specifies that applicants must pay for any surveys required to complete such conveyances. H.R. 3802 would amend that act to require the Secretary of Agriculture to pay for such surveys. CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 3802 would cost less than \$500,000 in fiscal year 2003, assuming the availability of appropriated funds. The bill would not affect direct spending or receipts; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply.

By requiring the Secretary to pay for surveys, H.R. 3802 would increase federal costs to complete conveyances under the Education Land Grant Act. The magnitude of that increase would depend on the number of school districts that apply for conveyances under that act. According to the Forest Service, only one such conveyance has occurred since land transfers were authorized in 2000, and a few applications are pending. Based on information from the Forest Service, CBO estimates that the cost of the required surveys averages \$250,000 per application. Based on the current level of program activity, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 3802 would cost up to \$1 million a year, depending on the number of applications and assuming the availability of appropriated funds.

H.R. 3802 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments. Enacting this legislation would benefit local school districts that receive land under the Education Land Grant Act.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Megan Carroll (for federal costs) and Marjorie Miller (for the state and local impact). This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.